

THE ROUTE OF COMPANY TOWNS IN LOWER CALIFORNIA: HISTORIC CENTERS AND INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

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Abstract

Company towns in the peninsula of Baja California can be considered a tool for urban development from the late nineteenth till early twentieth century. The Mexican Government used the industrialization in northern Mexico as a strategy of economic occupation, a great challenge to occupy a peninsula scarcely populated. Major territorial concessions to foreign companies allow them to settle large industries, to build up company towns and industrial cities. In the article I analyze the occupation and development policy of this part of Mexico showing 10 cases where companies mapped cities in this territory. I defend the hypothesis that these cities may have new development opportunities due to the rich industrial heritage they contain.

Keywords: company town, Baja California, urban model, heritage

Introduction

This document presents in a general way the research that has been studied since 2013¹, the recent study try to classify an urban model in the Baja California peninsula in Mexico during the late nineteenth century till the beginning of the twentieth century, the phenomenon of the company town in the last federal states of the Mexican republic. Focuses in the recognition of the industrial heritage of ten different urban grid's in this territory. Foreign capital founded company towns in this large peninsula orientated primary to different economic activities related to mining, agroindustry, salt works and for only colonize. With the intention to dignify the cultural landscape and to unify them in the elaboration of an industrial heritage route in the peninsula territory, this document present a recompilation of urban plans that the companies design showing how in almost all the cases the industrial heritage and the historic centers are in decay.

The Porfirian project of urban occupation in Baja California peninsula

Maybe one of the most important causes that Mexico lost the north territories of Alta California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas now part of the United States, was because there were very few Mexican people in the north, next to political and economic instability, plus the expansion of

¹ Master in urbanism research "The cities of the minerals, recognizing the urban heritage of northern México 1885-1921"

the United States in the industrial period were some of the factors that change the historical borders between the 2 countries². In 1850 when the new international border establishes the North Americans starts the financial penetration to the Mexicans border estates. This phenomenon it was well used by the Mexican government through territorial concessions to the foreign capital, using an urban strategy, forcing them to urbanize industrial villages to structure the Mexican frontier avoiding losing the peninsula against the US expansion in the last nineteenth century.

We can say that the Baja California peninsula (Lower California) starts its urbanization by the urban model company town, this implied that in the Porfirian period³ (1876 to 1910) they created new activities in places where nothing exists; the industrial mining, agroindustry and the construction of harbors, fabrics and warehouses implied that the foreign capitalists not only construct industrial installation, but also construct the entire town to consolidated there industries. It's important to mention that this type of urban planning was the pioneer to develop the region.

The projects of the cities were developed related to the economic activities. The architects and engineers were contract by the owners of the companies to design models of populations which modernized the lonely desert of Baja California, but very rich in resources to been exploited, always whit the disadvantage that the rich resources were located widely dispersed.

Table 1. Company that constructs a city in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century in the Baja California Peninsula

COMPANY	ORIGIN	POPULATION IN 1900 (APROX.)	ACTUAL POPULATION (APROX.)
International Company of Mexico	1882	1,000 a 2,000 hab.	500,000 hab.
Colorado River Land Company	1901	100 a 200 hab.	700,000 hab.
Compagnie du Boleo	1885	3,000 a 4,000 hab.	12,000 hab.
Hanbury & Garvey Company	1887	2,000 a 3,000 hab.	5,000 hab.
El Progreso Mining Company	1878	4,000 hab.	200 hab.
Salt exporter Company	1954	0 hab.	13,000 hab.
Mexican Western Company	1923	0 hab.	400 hab.
Company of oil, beer and wine	1861	50 hab.	65,000 hab.
Pacific Salt Company	1900	Pacific Salt Company	1900
Southwest Company of Onyx and Marbel	1889	Starting	Abandoned

Source: Author Elaboration. We classified the principal companies that started a industrial town in the Baja California Peninsula. The study is bounded in the peninsula for having a different number of cases in a define territory. Note: There are only 2 cases out of the Porfirian period.

² David Piñera. "The north frontier, from the Independence to the present day" and Viviana Brachet. "The population of Mexico 1824-1895". Departament of History research 1976.

³ The Porfirian government was a period of industrialization and modernization of the north of México.

Table 2. Type of industry in Baja California, late nineteenth century, early twentieth century

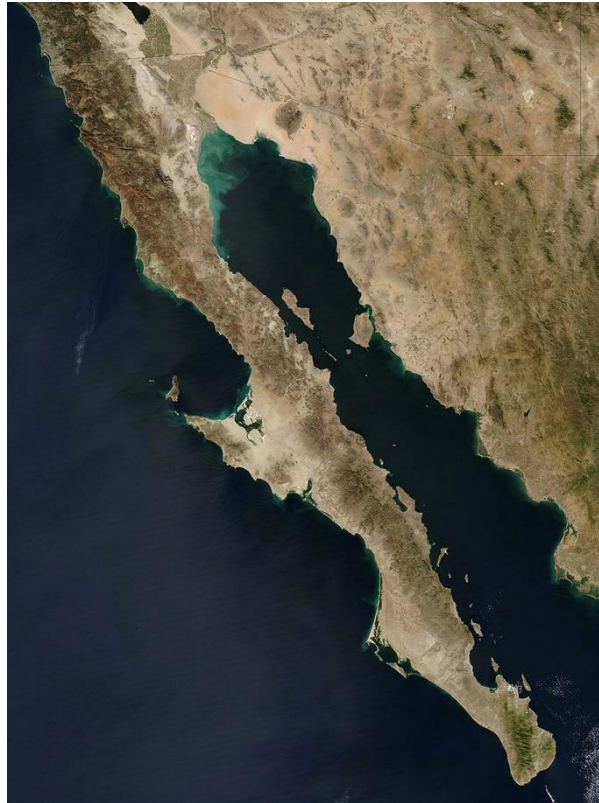
ACTIVITY	DURATION	CAUSE OF CLOSING	OWNERS	OBSERVATIONS
Mining	1876-1912	Mineral depletion	British capital	Eiffel construction – Industrial Heritage
Development	1882-1917	Concession cancelled for breach	Hanbury & Garvey – British and north american capital	It has architectural heritage "Balloon Frame" and port Industrial heritage
Mining	1885-1956	Mineral depletion	Rothchild Family– french capital	Rich industrial heritage- Eiffel construction
Agroindustry	1887-1917	Mexican Revolution	Hanbury & Garvey – British and north american capital	Mill and construction of the English colony
Agroindustry	1901-1937	Assault to the lands	US capital	Historic centre and irrigation canals
Mining	1954-1973	Solt to the Government	Daniel Ludwig, American visionary	The world's largest Salt industry, and industrial housing
Agroindustry	1861-	In function	Mexican and US capital	Railroad station
Mining	1923-	In function	Mexican and Canadian capital	Industrial town, and a church built whit plaster bricks
Mining	1889-1960	Abandoned	US capital	Industrial Housing, and a school of marbel pices
Mining	1900-1984	Abandoned	British capital	Building in ruins, and a broken dock

Source: Author Elaboration. This table shows the type of industry installed on the peninsula of Baja California in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

Table 3. Classification of Case Studies

COMPANY TOWN	DIMENTION OF THE BLOCK	ANTIQUITY OF THE BUILDING	HISTORIC CENTER	TYPE OF INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE
El Triunfo	60 m. x 60 m.	1878	10 blocks	Eiffel fireplace, bridges, industrial buildings and factories
Ensenada	100 m. x 100 m.	1882	60 blocks	Wine warehouses, "balloon frame", architecture, Victorian houses and harbor
Santa Rosalía	35 m. x 35 m.	1885	110 blocks	Smelter ruins, mines, buildings, Eiffel construction, port and "balloon frame" architecture
San Quintín	140 m. x 50 m.	1887	10 blocks	First mill and industrial housing
Mexicali	200 m. x 70 m.	1901	40 blocks	Irrigation canals, company buildings and factories
Guerrero Negro	85 m. x 85 m.	1954	20 blocks	Housing, factories and warehouses
Isla San Marcos	Irregular	1923	All the town	Iron structures, housing and plaster chapel
Tecate	135 m. x 60 m.	1888	21 blocks	Brewery building and railway station
Isla El Carmen	Irregular	1900	All the town	Salt infrastructure and abandoned village
El Mármol	Irregular	1899	All	Housing and old industrial infrastructures

Source: Author Elaboration. This table shows the type of industry installed on the peninsula of Baja California in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

Figure 1. Aerial photograph of the Baja California Peninsula

Note: It has an area of 143,396 square kilometers, a length of 1,250 kilometers and a width of 225 kilometers

Inside the Mexican colonization project of Porfirio Díaz, Baja California was an important piece, because the unoccupied territory. Here the railroad in the beginning of twentieth century started to construct but will never be finished, only in the frontier with the line connecting Mexicali, Tecate and Tijuana to the US Railway, the not presence of the railroad down the peninsula determinate the slow growth of the cities and put in evidence the strategy of the Mexican government to not connect the US railroad to the peninsula, this to maintain the territory away in those years to the annexationist intention of the US⁴.

The general result of this recent history is that this territory incorporate and complement a US economy through towns dedicated to cotton production, salt works, agroindustry and mining communities, all of them whit export character. Some of this cities have consolidated the Mexican and US frontier, others are simple ghost towns that resist in the desert landscape and the Baja California coast.

The territory project in Lower California was exclusive to occupy and modernizes the peninsula. In the Mexican revolution (1910-1920) some of this small towns were abandon, others increase slow, and it's not a causality there the cities more important are the closer to the US border. In this research we try to present 10 cases of urbanizations founded by companies that present productive and industrial activities from 1861 till 1954 in Baja California.

⁴ Hilarie Heath. "The bad accomplished Project of the peninsular railroad of the north district of Baja California 1887-1892.

The industrial period and the company towns of the peninsula

This form of occupation can be seen like a defense of the national sovereignty in this territory using paradoxically the North Americans capitalist to carry out the growing of this zone. The study begins with the checking of the urban projects that the company establish, this permits finding examples of different characteristics in industrial architecture related to this model of urbanization. We organize 10 existing cases through the peninsula that cut be a route of industrial heritage of company towns in our time.

In the north of Mexico during the industrialization this type of urbanism evolves in rhythm of the new capitalism and the new technology creating surprising results in early twentieth century. The company town have been installed in the history of urbanism like a urban manufacturing project, organized by architects and engineers, creating an environment where the different industrial areas are around the housing, all of this reach a notable physic, productive and social organization. Another definition of company town is an explicit ideal that transform the economic base of the American nation and a model that interprets the myth of the first capitalism like a perfect society serving to manufacturing matters. Like a town planning model it represents a complete alternative to the historic cities, not in terms of form and structure, as for the fact to assume the only and new function, the fabrics, only in terms of efficient of a productive system, creating a mono cultural system without socioeconomic breaks.

Figure 1. Industrial ruins in Santa Rosalia Baja California Sur



Note: Photograph of the author in 2013

Although the Southern Pacific Railroad could not reach the Lower California peninsula, only one railroad influence the Mexican frontier. That line brought a new way of constructing, they arrived new materials like wood and bricks, as well as equipment and technology precedent from the north American Midwest. At the same time the railroad was transformed into a vehicle of modern

architecture. It passed from constructing whit adobe (mass of mud and straw, molded in form of bricks dried to the sun used in Mexican construction) to wood, glass and zinc sheets.⁵ The system of wood structures called “Balloon Frame” made the region very popular this system in this territory. They well used prefabricate wood buildings and facades, all the towns grow very fast because of this constructing system helping to consolidated very fast the lonely Baja California desert. Some of the buildings were transported on boats from the east coast of the US, before the railroad appear, crossing the entire continent by ocean passing down the Cape Horn.

The thin peninsula of Lower California and all the coast between both sides, the sea of Cortes (Gulf of California) in one side and the great Pacific Ocean in the other side, maybe were the causes that the railroad project never finish the way down the Baja California (only some isolated railways under 35km, in mining communities). Here is when the ports, docks and harbors take their economic importance to export all de minerals and others products and be able to link this places to the world. The port was from the beginning the place where the people arrived, in the same time prefabricate housing and machines arrived too, this was the form to get to work and made efficient the company towns in the late nineteenth century in this territory.

Cases of study, evolution of the urban model, the company town

Where an agricultural colony became an industrial city: TECATE?

Since 1861 the president of Mexico Benito Juárez by decree started the agriculture colony in Tecate. Several ranch's and haciendas appear whit the intention to start occupying the most north frontier that Mexico has whit the United Estates that 13 years ago change their international limits. The town foundation was in 1888 and the first map was finish in 1892. The railroad arrive in 1908 and the station is construct, today has been cataloged an industrial monument for the history and contribution to develop the town⁶. The first oil industries, warehouse of wines and the beer industry were the economic engine to the region. In 1919 the urban plan was 21 blocks in a polygon, dividing lots of different dimension, the central block was divided in 2, constructing public buildings and the plaza. The town establishes the urban layout near the border and today is a consolidated city around 65,000 habitants.

Figure 3. Photograph of the urban beginnings of Tecate



⁵ Ben Brown. Introduction and impact of the railway in northern Mexico. Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez 2009, pp. 231-236. Chihuahua, México.

⁶ The railway station of Tecate in Baja California recently has been included by the National Institute of Anthropology and History in the National Catalogue of Historical Monuments.

Figure 4. Map of the first subdivisions of Tecate in 1892

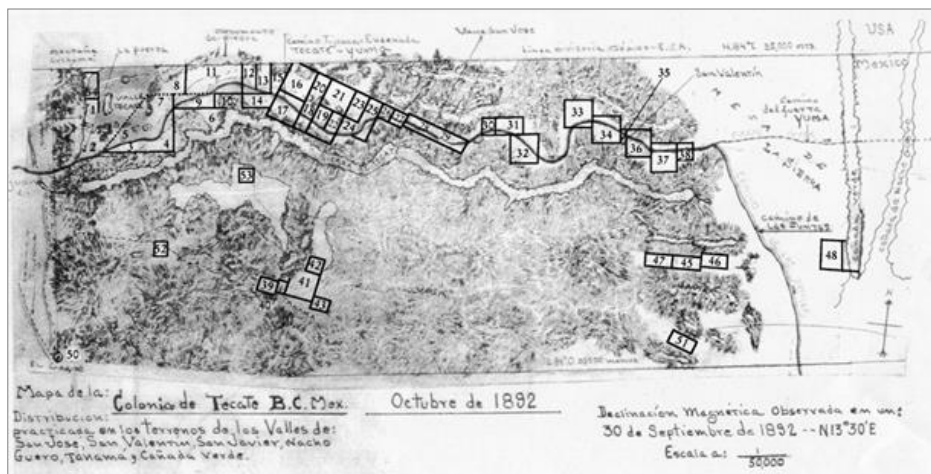


Figure 5. Photograph of the current state in which the railway station is in Tecate



Source: National Cultural Information Network , National Coordination of Institutional Development

Two mining ghost towns in the industrial period: EL TRIUNFO Y SAN ANTONIO

In 1900 this two mining towns were the most dynamic and populated of the peninsula. Here appear in 1862 the British company gold and silver mining Co. That in few years establish a full extraction work system in the region whit a little railroad to transport mineral. Near this zone an old real de minas (Spanish mining communities in Mexico) was working in XVIII whit rudimentary forms of extraction. Suddenly they appeared two population in the mines of the same name: San Antonio y El Triunfo whit 7 kilometers between each other. The North American company El progreso Mining Co. start the construction in 1878 of a modern town dedicated to the industrial mining in El Triunfo. The consolidation of the companies between 1878 and 1895 helped significant to the growing of the town and the urban structures outside the mines, but the boom would not last long because in the first decade of the twentieth century, these two towns were completely abandoned.⁷ Late the nineteenth century they construct more new mechanism in that time in the mining industry like tunnels whit railroad included, metal

⁷ Brief history of the mining towns of Baja California Sur. An urban history of the people of San Antonio and El Triunfo. Authors: Flor Barreto, Rocio Rochin y Gilberto Piñeda.

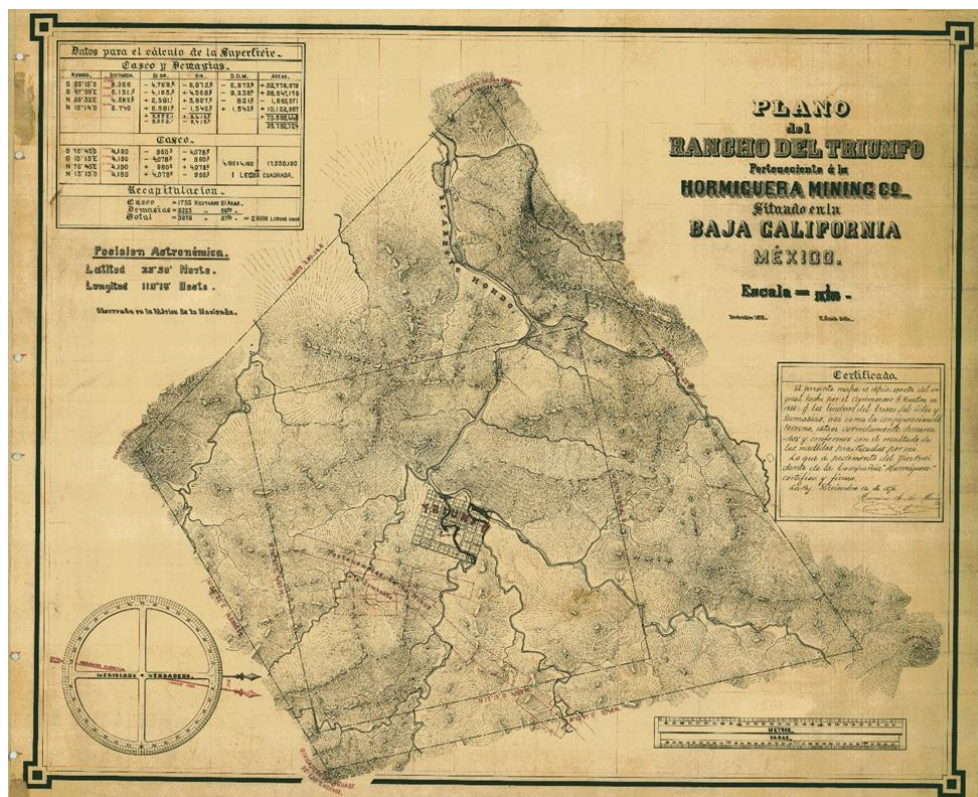
smelters plants, bridges, warehouse, administrative buildings and housing for the workers. All the buildings and the infrastructure are from after twentieth century, now the ruins of the two smokestacks La Ramona and La Julia are still there, allegedly the design is attributed to Gustav Eiffel. Actually the two mining towns are less than 800 habitants, the urban grids and the industrial ruins are in danger to be despised, although the attempts of the government in the last years to make the place a cultural tourism destination, but without significant change.

Figure 6. Industrial ruins in the Triunfo Baja California Sur



Source: www.bajachallengetours.com

Figure 7. Plan of the mining district of El Triunfo in 1870



Source: Mapoteca Orozco and Berra, Mexico City

Figure 8. Photograph of urban early port of Ensenada



Figure 9. Plan of the lotification by the International Company of Mexico in 1889 where it was projected the city. We can identify the blocks, 100m x 100m were divided into 8 lots of 25m x 50m



Source: Mapoteca Orozco and Berra, Mexico City

The northern port of the Mexican Pacific: ENSENADA

In the year 1882, in the first decade of the Porfirian government, the territorial concession to foreign capital (British, North American and French) move fast, and the urban layout in the port

appear. With the intention to bring north American buyers and new developments they start an ambitious urban project in the Mexican pacific coast by north american capital they start the International Company of Mexico that years later they will sell the company to British capital. They called a colonization company or simply The English Company. In the same time of this concession, in south California a boom in the sale of real estate was given, the phenomenon known as boom it was an immobiliary bonanza in the cities of Los Angeles, San Diego and next to the Mexican side.⁸ The urban grid of the port of Ensenada follows urban models of the California cities in that time. They construct the port that helped receive all de balloon frame prefabricate constructions they were the company building, houses with Victorian styles and a hotel. They install wineries and commerce also. The port was very important because here the railroad never arrive, although it is located only 100 kilometers from the international border. The unique building of the company still exists and now is the office of the National Institute of anthropology and history of the city. A good example of industrial heritage is the Santo Tomas wineries that actually have been declared zone of historical monuments in the oldest urban district. The district contains 14 industrial building whit historical, cultural, social and architectonic values. The buildings are part of the traditions of the city, particularly in the production of wine, this bring to Baja California a privilege in a national level in this activity. All the buildings are in the oldest blocks and are part of the original layout develop in 1886. In the year 1905 Ensenada had 2,100 habitants, today is a city of 470,000 habitants and the port consolidates the connections to Asia. It's important to keep the first industrial construction, because some of them are been destroyed in the pass years.

Figure 10. Photo of the office of the International Company of Mexico. Currently home to the National Institute of Anthropology and History of the city of Ensenada



⁸ David Piñera y Alma Bejarano. Architectural expressions shared on the border of Baja California and California. *Revista Culturales*, vol.7, no14, Mexicali 2011.

Figure 11. Photograph of the wines warehouse of Santo Tomas, in the center of the city



Figure 12. Photograph of Santa Rosalia, Baja California Sur



A French copper town in Lower California desert: The Boleo in SANTA ROSALÍA

In 1885 the Compagnie Du Boleo develop the company town of Santa Rosalia, which it was the first of its kind for the extraction and processing of copper in Mexico. A territorial concession granted in times of Porfirio Diaz government to a French mining company leads to the founding of a new city: Santa Rosalía in Lower California, whose urban development follows a common pattern based on the direct connection between residence and work. The city shows a clear social segregation with difficult working conditions, which were characteristic of the industrial revolution in the country. In the mid-twentieth century, the city is at its economic peak, but

mineral depletions start appearing in the most productive mines and the population systems.⁹ The entrance to the post-industrial period, the company's bankruptcy, and its abandonment call for an urban regeneration from economic decline in order to acknowledge and recover valuable industrial heritage that still exists yet is currently in decay, because this reason in 1986 a presidential decree recognize the zone with 31 historic monuments protected by the National Institute of Anthropology and History. Santa Rosalia had a population around 6000 habitants in 1896, until 1940 never passed the 12000 habitants. Today is a village that refused to die like Romero Gil mentioned in his book, the actual populations is 11000 habitats, and the examples of industrial architecture are all around the town, most are deteriorating or abandon. Gradually some buildings are being restored, but there is still much to be done in the ruins of the industrial area. In general the town is in good conservation, here is located the church of Santa Barbara, a prefabricated metal construction (duclos houses) presented in Paris in the World Exposition of 1889, allegedly designed by French engineer Gustav Eiffel. The economic vocation of the town have changed when the depletion of the copper mines run out. Now the economy turn to fishing and recently the government (FONATUR) planed a touristic zone including the port in the Mar de Cortes Project trying to reactivate the economy by tourism.¹⁰

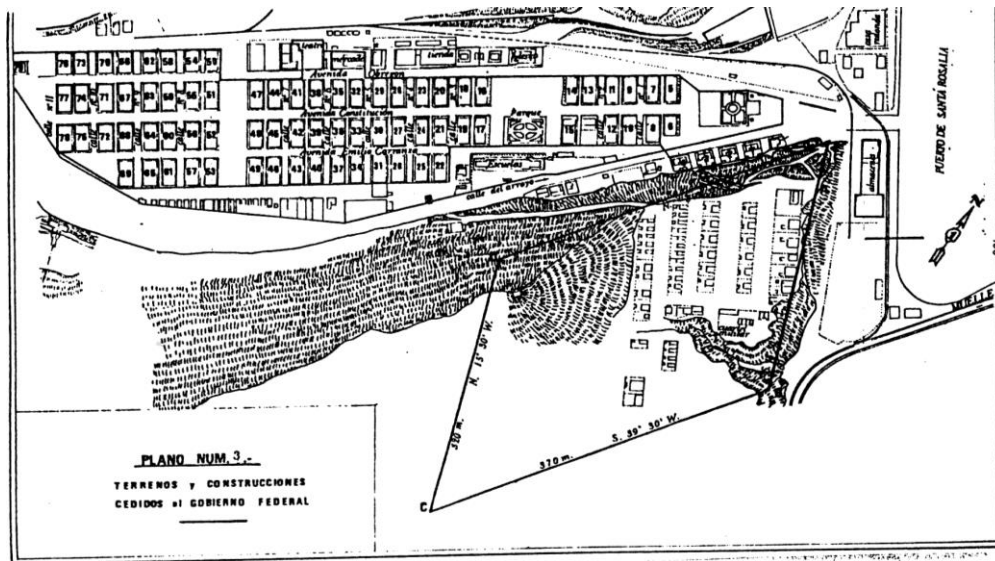
Figure 13. Photograph of mining set of Purgatory on the outskirts of Santa Rosalia



⁹ The case of the company town of Santa Rosalia in 2014 was presented a paper at the First Colloquium of Industrialization Process in Mexico, organized by the National Institute of Anthropology and History with the title: The built legacy and the forgotten industrial heritage . The Boleo Santa Rosalia in Baja California Sur.

¹⁰ The National Fund for Tourism Development (FONATUR) present the project in 2001 of the Mar de Cortes route, that was intended to provide a comprehensive range of marine infrastructure and services support through a network of ports.

Figure 14. Map of Santa Rosalia



Source: Center for Mexican and Central American Studies. The Boleo: The town that refused to die, Santa Rosalia, Baja California Sur 1885-1954. Juan Manuel Romero Gil. We can see the polygon given by the company to the Federal Government after the Mexican Revolution to establish the Mexican colony.

Figure 15. Photographs of the copper smelter building, the office building of the Boleo Company (now museum) and abandon workshops

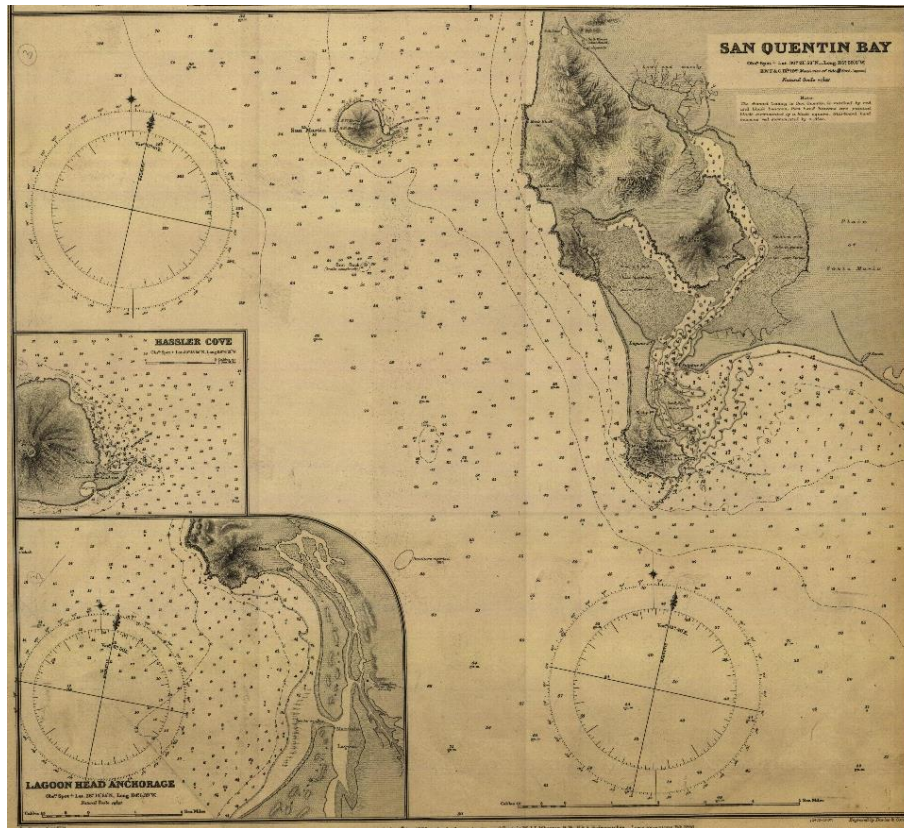


The SAN QUINTIN Bay: The failure capital of the British Company

The same company that projected Ensenada, but now whit British owners quickly project whit out success the town of San Quintin. This was grounded by the territorial concession of colonization signed by President Porfirio Diaz. In 1887 they develop an irrigation colony in the valley; this foundation had the expectative to be the center of operation of the British company, with the interest of the Mexican government to occupy the half of peninsula. During 20 years they construct infrastructures, roads, a water company and they bring to the town the most modern flour mill in Latin America, but the company fail to connect by railroad the new town whit San Diego California 250 kilometers away, and only constructed around 30 kilometers of railroad in San Quintin. They also made works on the dock and the dredging of the bay. In 1910 whit the Porfirian government over and the beginning of the Mexican revolution, the revolutionary leaders did not recognize the concession and the town, in 1917 there were almost

nothing of the flourishing agriculture town of San Quintin disappearing for more than 30 years. In the present we can see urban grids in different part of the valley, the population is around 5000 habitants in the center of the town. Today several agricultural companies dominate the region and some of them still function as old company towns, the paternalism of the companies is very present. We know of the existing of few industrial construction and the conservation of first mill armed in the late nineteenth century with iron pieces propriety of the British company.

Figure 16. Figure 16. Location map of the Bay of San Quintin



Source: Mapoteca Orozco and Berra, Mexico City

Figure 17. Mill and house of the British colony in the late nineteenth century



Source: Photograph from the collection of Tomas Sanchez Ponce de León, a member of the first citizen City of San Quintin, A.C. 2009

Figure 18. Ancient Industrial building in San Quintin



The ghost mine of onyx: EL MARMOL

These rich quarries were discovered in 1889, then the Southwest Company of Onyx and marble founded a helped built a little town, the New Pedrera Onix Company was involved in the extraction and export all the mineral to the US. This onyx mine was the most important in the industrial period, 90% of this mineral sold in the US came from this mine, the town was located in a mesa (particular zone of the location of company towns).¹¹ The mine close in 1958 and today regrettably almost nothing exist only some few houses and the ruins of a school and an old crane.

Figure 19. El Marmol, Onyx capital of the word.



Note: "lies rusty, dusty and bedraggled in the center of a high and arid mesa". The onyx is taken near the surface, as seen in the foreground

¹¹ Investments, colonization and economic development in northwestern Mexico, 1870-1940. Authors: José Alfredo Gómez Estrada, Araceli Almaraz Alvarado.

The abandoned salt works in: EL CARMEN ISLAND

From 1825 to 1860 there was rudimentary extraction of salt in the island. But is until 1900 to 1930 when the Mexican government gave a territorial concession to a British company, the Pacific Salt Company when the town appear, the company design a productive urban plan in the island they construct housing for the workers, the building of the company, school, cemetery, infrastructure, warehouse and a church. The industrial works ended in 1984 and today the ruins of the old dock and building, are what is left on the island.

Figure 20. Ruins of the port and abandon building in El Carmen Island

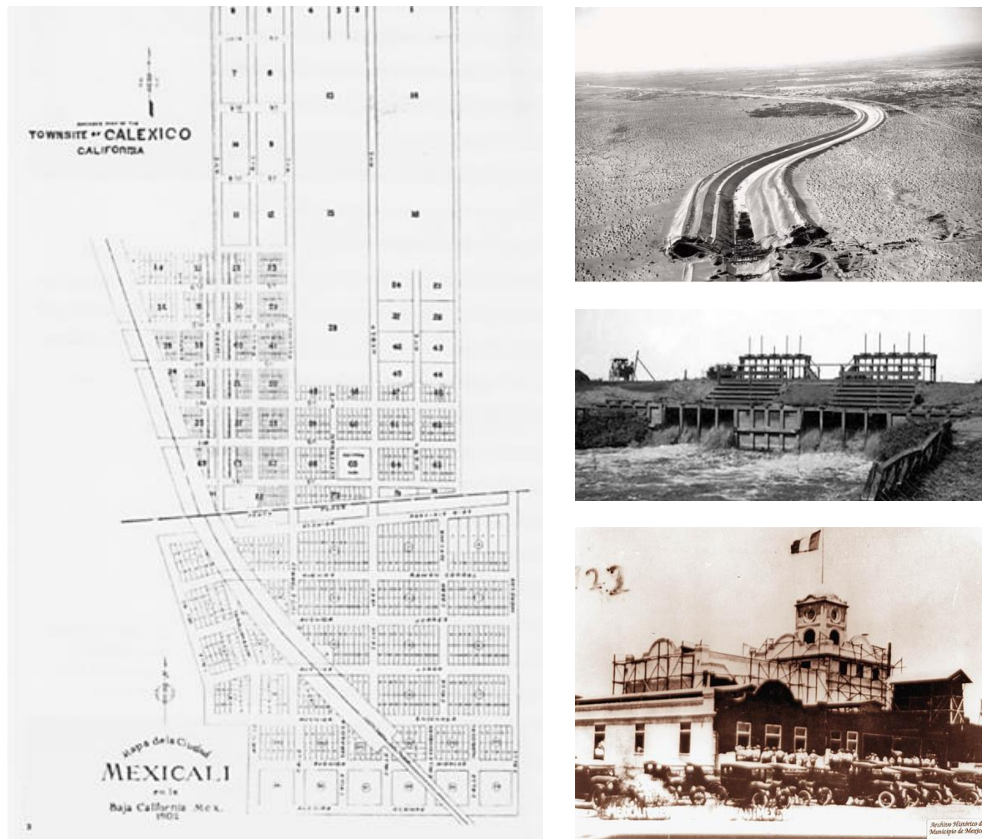


The world's largest cotton ranch: MEXICALI

In the region of the delta of the Colorado River in the beginning of the twentieth century appears in the northern corner of the peninsula a prosper agriculture empire built by the Colorado River Land Company, it was a north American capital that project a successful irrigation colony true the construction of a complete system of canals and dams, bringing the water of the Colorado River to irrigate a desert in the Mexican and US border. The owners of the Colorado River Land Company were US businessmen responsible of the development of the South of California, one of them was Harrison Gray Otis owner of the influent paper Los Angeles Times.¹² The company designed a continuous layout in the border, Calexico in the US whit housing, administrative buildings and Mexicali in the Mexican side locating the workers colony, shops, houses and warehouses. The town of Mexicali was in the beginning more connected to the US instead then Mexico, the railroad appear in 1904 by the Southern Pacific Railroad and cross the two towns. The Colorado River Land Company organize in 1902 and it was commissioned to buy and develop the land until 1937. The company consolidated the world largest cotton ranch. Today the Building of the company and some industrial buildings are considerate heritage of the city, the city have 700,000 habitants, but the original center it's in very bad condition even doth it contains rich building and opportunities to future interventions.

¹² Dorothy Pierson Kering. "The Mexicali valley and the Colorado River Land Company 1902-1946.

Figure 21. Map of the city of Mexicali, Mexico and Calexico United States jointly planned by the American engineer Charles Robinson Rockwood



Source: Early urban populations of Baja California, Antonio Padilla Corona. Photographs of the construction of the canal that diverted the waters of the Colorado River to irrigate the agricultural colonies of the two countries, and photograph of the Mexicali Brewery in the twentieth century

Figure 22. Aerial photograph of the city of Mexicali and Calexico near the international boundary

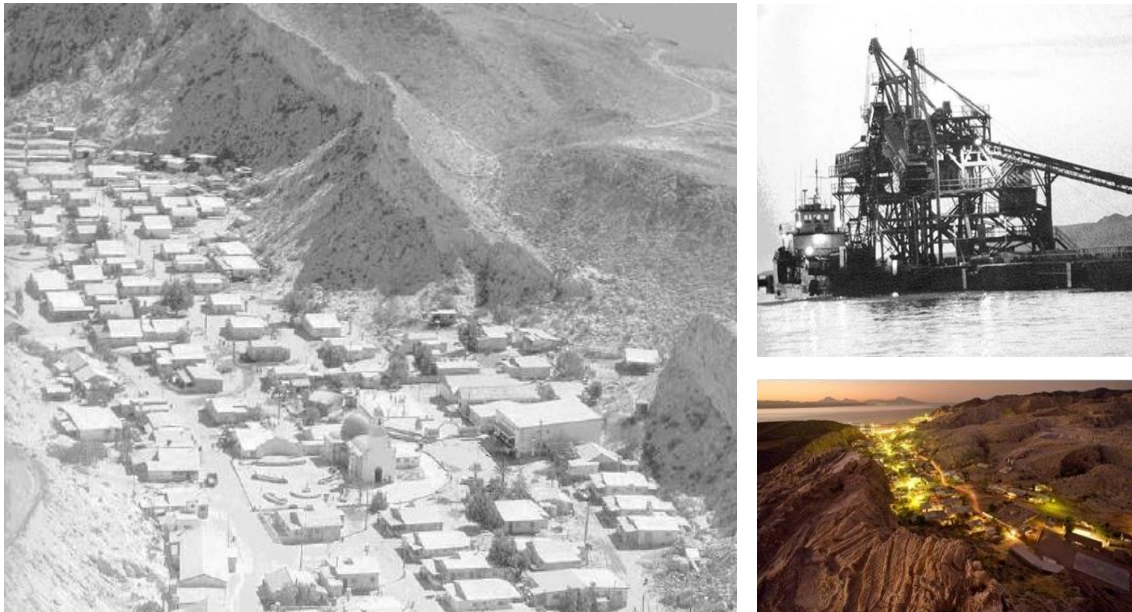


Source: National Geographic Magazine. Photographs of Karen Kasmauski, 2007 National Geographic Society

The plaster island: The active industrial heritage of the SAN MARCOS ISLAND

The missionaries that explore the peninsula of Lower California in 1765, talk about the existing of a rich vein of plaster very thin and transparent that was difficult to find in another place, in those years they start a rudimentary extraction in the island. The local historians mentioned that in the late nineteenth century there was Sweden and north Americans boats extracting plaster of the island.¹³ It is not until 1923 when a planned settlement is developed by the Mexican Western Company, an industrial colony to provide the extraction and the exportation. The company constructs an electric plant, the dock infrastructure, the balloon frame housing and a church made with bricks of plaster that easily can be considered an industrial monument with all the entire town. Today the half capital of the company is Canadian and the town has 400 inhabitants. The San Marcos Island is the number one exporter of plaster in Mexico and the second in the world, the industrial heritage here is still working until the plaster runs out and the people will abandon the island.

Figure 23. Photograph of the population and industrial facilities and mineral transportation. San Marcos



Source: Comsa, Isla San Marcos: A company, a community, a challenge, West Company Mexicana S.A. Mexico 1997

The vision of the biggest salt industry in the world: GUERRERO NEGRO

They say that the name of Guerrero Negro comes from the name of a whaler ship that sank near the Ojo de Liebre Bay in 1858 called Black Warrior. In 1884 the north Americans already have salt works with rails and others systems, but it was not until 70 years before in 1953 when

¹³ Brief history of the mining towns of Baja California, Isla San Marcos, a small tour of its history. Authors: Luis Larreta , Homer Aviles and Gilberto Pineda

Daniel K. Ludwig a north American visionary that owned an important shipping company obtain a territorial concession through the Mexican commission of mining promotion and funded in 1957 a salt industry to satisfy in first instance the demand of salt in the west coast of the United States and then to Asia.¹⁴

In the same year started to arrive the first workers, the company construct all the housing, shops, roads and the dock industrial infrastructures to export the salt.

Today the town has 13,000 habitants and is the salt mine most important in the world, an example of modern company town were industrial ruins exist like the old lighthouse and the first warehouses and canals, same as the important value of the active infrastructure.

Figure 24. Location of the Bay of Black Guerrero and photo of some old industrial installations

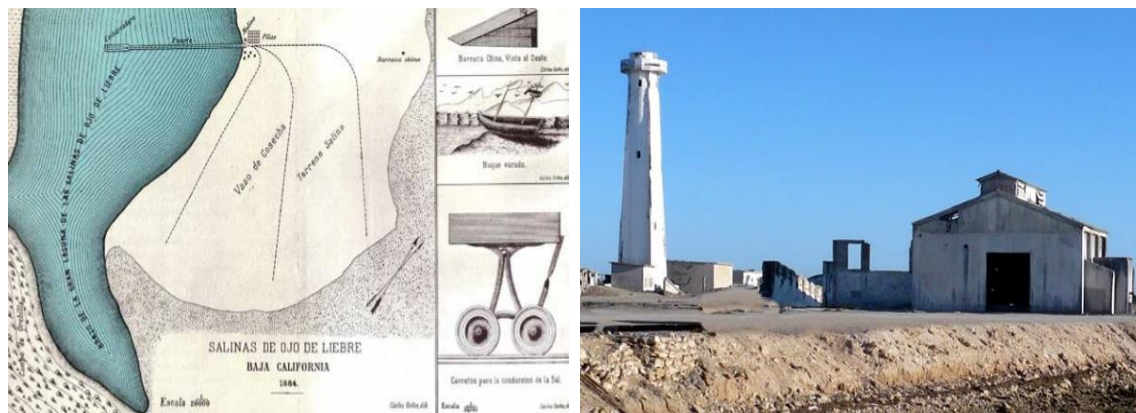
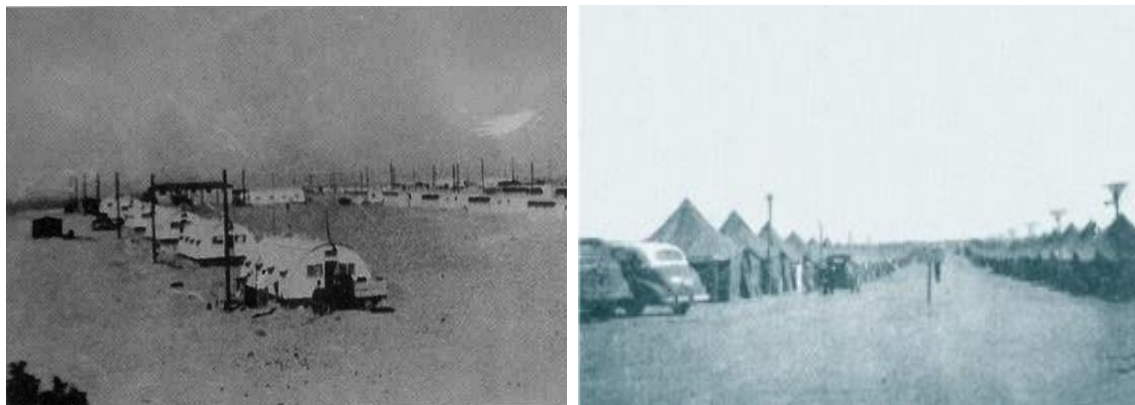


Figure 25. Collectives homes for workers, were cylindrical prefabricated sheet constructed in 1956. Which had been used as bedrooms by the Americans during World War II



Source: Guerrero Negro, chronic salt and sand

¹⁴ Brief history of the mining towns of Baja California, Guerrero Negro, a small tour of its history. Authors: Bianca Gpe. Rodríguez and Gilberto Pineda.

A cultural route of industrial heritage to strengthen the territory

The cultural routes in post-industrial territories in the last 35 years have been interest in studies of urban reflections whit great results, which they are been able to make revert abandon situations in city centers in different parts of the world through a cultural tourism. In the US and Europe before Mexico started the interest to value and rescue the industrial architecture, production infrastructures and building of the industrial period. Pioneer projects and studies like the group of textile company towns in Lowell, the excellent regeneration of buildings that tell the history of the United Estates industrialization.¹⁵

Other example is the Iron Bridge in England that is the icon of the industrial revolution, the mining region of the Severn River that with the system of museums today is the most visited site protected by UNESCO.¹⁶ In France the mining region of Le Creusot or in Germany in the region of the Ruhr River are extraordinary examples of valuation of the heritage in the territory. In Spain specifically in Cataluña they project the patrimonial axis of the industrial colonies of the Llobregat River¹⁷, also in Spain the route of industrial culture in Guipúzcoa is and other example of a touristic itinerary that show part of the iron landscape, the history and industrial identity in the Vasco region.

In Latin America the examples of Chile whit the industrial heritage of the copper towns, and Uruguay and Argentina whit all the ruins of the cattle raising industry might be the examples we need to start searching in all Latin America for this recuperation of this parts of territory in a sustainable way.

Figure 26. Images of 3 Industrial landscapes of Spain, Asturias and the coal heritage, the Vasco Country with its Iron landscapes and Catalonia with its textile industries and colonies



¹⁵ The industrial heritage as a catalyst for urban renewal. Two American examples. Architect. Dennis Frenchman.

¹⁶ Miguel Angel Alvarez Areces . Industrial heritage. A future for the past from the European view . Notes vol. 21 no.1 Bogota June- Dec. 2008

¹⁷ Joaquín Sabaté, Pere Vall. Heritage and territorial project. Colonies, Sequia of Manresa and Delta del Llobregat. Barcelona Provincial Network of Municipalities. Area of infrastructure, urban planning and Habitatge. 2004

In Mexico examples like the well-known silver route (the inside land path) in Spanish “El Camino de Tierra adentro”¹⁸, the connection of royal paths and the ruins they have recently have been declared world heritage by UNESCO. Other case is the appearance of the management plan of the Agave landscape and the old industrial installation of tequila, which values the Mexican cultural landscape and shows the rich elements in the territory.¹⁹ A specific case is the recent nomination to world heritage is the Fundidora park in Monterrey with enormous industrial towers and fireplaces that was pioneer in smelting iron in Latin America, which since the year 2000 started transforming to a cultural center, an industrial heritage museum, today the best park of the city²⁰.

Also mention the mining district of Real del Monte and Pachuca Hidalgo where they are converting the cultural tourism in a real alternative to the industrial heritage²¹. The south silver route in the state of Guerrero a strategy to regional development the region. As we can see, today we have many examples that make references to the interest of the industrial ruins and the importance of these pieces in post-industrial territory.²²

Focusing in the peninsula of lower California place of our interest, in the late twentieth century they designed a touristic route called the “the missions route” in Spanish “la ruta de las misiones”²³, this was a touristic offer promoted by the state that has been the first action in a big scale to try to give a kind of territorial culture structure in the peninsula, the royal path of the mission gave the peninsula a first draw of the Spanish missions and Mexican towns connection with Alta California today the state of California in the US and Baja California and Baja California Sur two federative states of Mexico.

Today that lost old path in the Mexican side matches with the only existing highway in the peninsula that runs 1000 miles in the desert between 2 seas. The lonely highway still has been the only connection to small towns and big cities mostly in the coast.

¹⁸ El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro was included in the list of World Heritage by UNESCO, on August 1, 2010. It was added in the category of “cultural itinerary”. The route includes areas of the Federal District, State of Mexico, Hidalgo, Queretaro, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Aguascalientes, San Luis Potosi and several others. In the part of the route that lies in Mexican territory, about 1,400 kilometers of the 2,600 total, elements linked to the road itself are located, such as bridges and ancient paths, towns, farms, cemeteries, churches, chapels and mines. The road Tierra Adentro was in use from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, and was used to carry an orderly, efficient and to some safe point way, the silver was extracted from the mines of San Luis Potosi, Guanajuato and Zacatecas, as well as in an opposite direction, carrying utensils and machines needed for extraction work.

¹⁹ Ignacio Gómez. Management plan for the agave landscape and ancient industrial facilities of tequila. The cultural heritage as a trigger of regional development, history, commitments and challenges. Rizoma 2009. Industrial Heritage magazine. Rescuing a past heritage of the future.

²⁰ Francisco Vidargas. History of a candidature: Los Altos Hornos de Fundidora Monterrey. World Heritage List of UNESCO. Rizoma 2009. Industrial Heritage magazine. Rescuing a past heritage of the future.

²¹ Belem Oviedo. Cultural tourism, a viable alternative to the industrial heritage. mining district of Real del Monte and Pachuca Hidalgo. Rizoma 2009. Industrial Heritage magazine. Rescuing a past heritage of the future.

²² Nestor Salinas. The silver route of the south: a strategy for regional development from industrial heritage. Industrial heritage and architecture for production. Rizoma 2009. Industrial Heritage magazine. Rescuing a past heritage of the future.

²³ Miguel Angel Sorroche. Cultural landscape and heritage in Baja California. Department of History, Geography and Art. University Jaume I. University of Granada 2011

Figure 27. Drawing of the industrial route of company towns

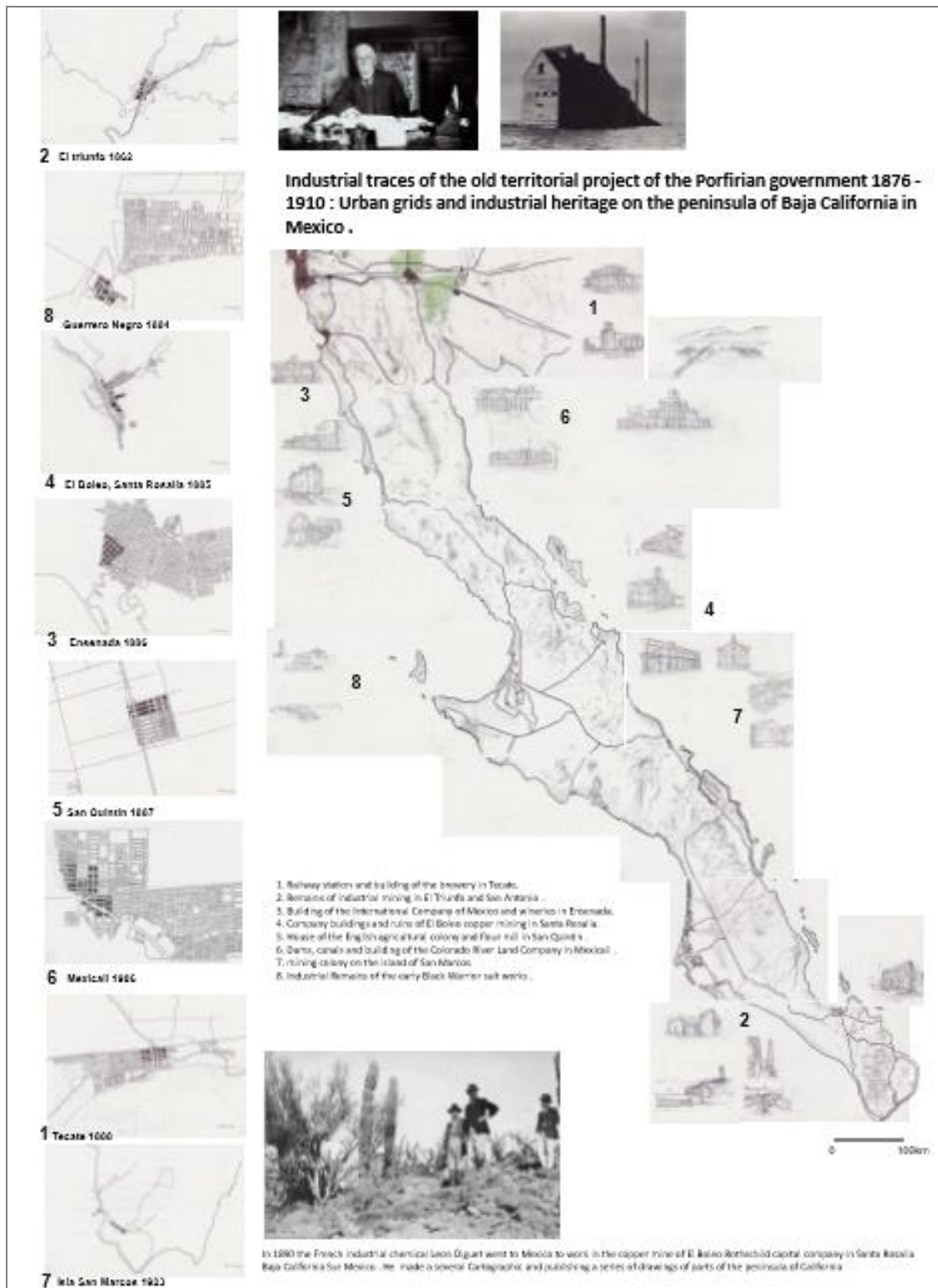


Figure 28. Photograph of the author in 2013. The only road on the peninsula of Baja California



Probably the last initiative had been develop in the Guadalupe Valley in Ensenada region with the wine route that all years in august celebrates the vendimia (wine festivities) and is been very popular converting the site in a cultural itinerary²⁴. We can end this article with the words of Fernando Diaz²⁵: *He mention that the recognize of the landscape and most outstanding components requires a sort level of organization for a better comprehension. The territory presents several composition not always evident. Correctly linked they constitute a territory story of significative episodes of the history and the landscape. For those objectives the physical structure needs an order to rank the pieces, as well as to distribute the function in other terms we have to transform the heritage in resources.*

Final reflection

We can affirm that in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century the company town in the peninsula of Baja California (Lower California) was an urban model of colonization and modernization of this territory through foreign capital industry. This bring a different way of urbanizes this part of Mexico, the support of the conceptual urban ideas had specific characteristic supported in the projects of the companies, and have nothing to do whit the spanish urban tradition, but having a very influence of a commercial division of the land, very characteristic of the US urbanism in the industrial period. Today the situation is different, the

²⁴ Lino Meraz, Jorge Valderrama and Sonia Elizabeth. The wine route of the Guadalupe Valley: A differentiated competitive strategy for local development. Autonomous University of Baja California.

²⁵ Fernando Diaz "Trazas, mojones y poblados del norte de traslasierra. Elements for the definition of a territorial structure" Magazine Identities, territory and heritage project. International Laboratory of Cultural Landscapes . Number 2. Barcelona 2010.

original layouts of the companies, the abandon factories, mines and the rich industrial heritage in lower California is in decay and needs a quick valorization. This work try in a first stage to show all the places whit industrial heritage, to provide a different land use planning incorporating a route of company towns in lower California showing an industrial itinerary capable to strengthen the structure of the territory that count with an enormous potential. A route that today can tell the story of the industrial culture of 10 company towns connected down the peninsula of Baja California. The cultural tourism and the identity like economic engine result the key to put and create new initiatives were the resources work to develop policies orientated to the conservation of the industrial ruins forgotten in the territory. The Lower California is maybe the less populated peninsula in the world, that contains a different identity that the rest of Mexico. Finally we try to check that the foundation of company towns was a model of urbanization and study what remains today of the original urban grids and the industrial ruins.